

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /065 W
-----060938Z 081110 /15

O P 060855Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7044
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USDOCOSOUTH

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VIENNA FOR LEDSKY

E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, TU
SUBJECT: PREPARATIONS FOR JUNE ELECTIONS

REF: ANKARA 2517 (DTG 051530Z APR 77)

1. THE EARLY ELECTION DECISION TAKEN BY TURKISH NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY (NA) EVENING APRIL 5 WAS IMMEDIATELY PUBLISHED
IN THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE AND THE DATE FOR PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTIONS ESTABLISHED AS JUNE 5.

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2. NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) LEADER AND DEPUTY PRIMIN
ERBAKAN, WHOSE PARTY OPPOSED THE EARLY ELECTION DECISION
(ONE MEMBER VOTED AGAINST, THE OTHERS REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE VOTE), IMMEDIATELY ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO
APPEAL THE DECISION TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT. ERBAKAN
ALLEGES THAT THE METHODS EMPLOYED BY THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S
PARTY (RPP) AND THE JUSTICE PARTY (JP) IN CIRCUMVENTING

OPPOSITION TO EARLY ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN IN GROSS VIOLATION OF THE CONSTITUTION.

3. COMMENT: IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHAT PRACTICAL AFFECT ERBAKAN'S ACTION WILL HAVE ON THE EARLY ELECTION DECISION. MOST LOCAL OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE MOST LIKELY OUTCOME WILL BE SWIFT CONSIDERATION AND REJECTION OF ERBAKAN'S APPEAL BY THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT. END COMMENT.

4. THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DID NOT DISBAND ITSELF WITH THE DECISION TO HAVE EARLY ELECTIONS AND AT ITS SESSION APRIL 6 WILL CONSIDER THE MOTION OF CENSURE PRESENTED BY THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DP) APRIL 1. THIS MOTION IS BASED ON STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR (NSP DEPUTY ASILTURK) TO THE EFFECT THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS NO LONGER WORKING AS A UNIT AND IS THEREFORE NO LONGER ABLE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SECURITY OF LIFE IN THE COUNTRY. TO BRING THE GOVERNMENT DOWN, AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF THE PLENARY OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WILL BE NECESSARY, I.E., 226 VOTES. SINCE ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES COMBINED DO NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT VOTES TO PASS THE MOTION, THE FATE OF THE MOTION DEPENDS ON ACTIONS OF THE NSP. THE NSP MET APRIL 5 TO CONSIDER WHAT POSITION IT SHOULD TAKE ON THE MOTION, BUT DID NOT REACH A DECISION. IT IS SCHEDULED TO MEET AGAIN APRIL 6. TURKISH PRESS APRIL 6 QUOTES MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE OZAL AS SAYING THAT IT IS INEVITABLE THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT CONTINUE UNTIL ELECTIONS, POINTING OUT THAT IT WOULD BE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH A NEW GOVERNMENT FOR THE TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO ELECTIONS. (THIS STATEMENT ALSO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUGGESTS THAT THE NSP IS NOT PARTICULARLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR ITS EFFORT TO OVERTURN THE EARLY ELECTION DECISION.)

5. COMMENT: BY BRINGING THE GOVERNMENT DOWN AT THIS TIME, ERBAKAN WOULD GAIN SOME IMMEDIATE SATISFACTION AT HAVING DAMAGED HIS COALITION PARTNER (AND BITTER RIVAL), DEMIREL. HOWEVER, IF HE STAYS IN THE GOVERNMENT HE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE SOME CONTROL OVER THE DECISIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD. THEREFORE, IT WOULD SEEM TO BE TO HIS ADVANTAGE TO RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO BRING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT AT THIS TIME. END COMMENT.

6. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DECISION, THE HIGH ELECTION COMMISSION PUBLISHED THE REGULATIONS WHICH WILL GOVERN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. HENCEFORTH, GOVERNMENT MINISTERS WILL BE RESTRICTED FROM PARTICIPATING IN GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONIES FOR GOVERNMENT PROJECTS. THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO USE THEIR GOVERNMENT-PROVIDED VEHICLES

WHILE CAMPAIGNING. SPECIFIC PERIODS WILL BE SET ASIDE ON RADIO AND TELEVISION FOR THE VARIOUS PARTIES TO BROADCAST THEIR VIEWS. CIVIL SERVANTS WISHING TO RUN FOR ELECTIONS MUST RESIGN THEIR POSITIONS WITHIN SEVEN DAYS. MOREOVER, IN ACCORDANCE WITH CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS, THE MINISTERS OF INTERIOR (NSP ASILTURK), JUSTICE (NSP MUFTUOGLU) AND COMMUNICATIONS (JP MENTESE) MUST BE REPLACED BY INDEPENDENTS WITHIN FIVE DAYS.

7. THE PROCESS OF CANDIDATE SELECTION FOR THE 452 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEATS AND 46 SENATE SEATS WHICH WILL BE CONTESTED DURING THIS ELECTION WILL BEGIN IMMEDIATELY AND MUST BE COMPLETED ON APRIL 24.

8. COMMENT: THIS SHORT PERIOD OF TIME WILL GIVE A DISTINCT ADVANTAGE TO INCUMBENTS AND PARTY REGULARS. WE UNDERSTAND THIS ARGUMENT WAS USED EXTENSIVELY BY RPP AND JP LEADERS
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TO PERSUADE OTHERWISE RELUCTANT DEPUTIES TO AGREE TO SUPPORT THE EARLY ELECTION PROPOSAL. END COMMENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ANKARA02540
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770119-0897
Format: TEL
From: ANKARA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770484/aaaacvdm.tel
Line Count: 142
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4e2e54a9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 ANKARA 2517
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26-Aug-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2887395
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PREPARATIONS FOR JUNE ELECTIONS
TAGS: PINT, TU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4e2e54a9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009